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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 USUN NEW YORK 000408

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SUBJECT: UN/DPA BRIEFS SECURITY COUNCIL ON FIJI SITUATION

Classified By: Ambassador Rosemary DiCarlo for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) UN Undersecretary for Political Affairs Lynn Pascoe briefed the Security Council on April 20 on the deteriorating democratic situation in Fiji. He began by reminding members that the Security Council had issued a press statement in December 2006 after the coup in Fiji, urging a restoration of democratic government, and gave a brief rundown of events since then. He noted President Iloilo's April 10 abrogation of Fiji's constitution, the dismissal of judiciary members, and the five-year postponement of elections. Pascoe then highlighted the Secretary General's statement which deplored the latest measures in Fiji and urged a return to democracy, as well as UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay's April 15 statement expressing deep concern about the sacking of members of the judiciary and media restrictions.

¶2. (C) After the 2006 coup, Pascoe continued, the UN and the Commonwealth supported efforts to help Fiji return to democracy, and the UN Department of Political Affairs sent four missions to Fiji. They were encouraged by the Government of Fiji's interest in having the UN participate in helping a return to democracy. The Secretary General accepted Fiji's invitation to help the President's Political Dialogue Forum in Fiji, and issued a statement on September 24, 2008 indicating the UN's willingness to assist on the basis of participation by all political parties. The UN also perceived broad popular support among Fijians for this type of UN/Commonwealth help, and on March 3 of this year told Fiji it would proceed with the President's Political Dialogue Forum. However, Pascoe continued, the government then denied permission for the UN/Commonwealth team to attend preliminary talks, and Commodore Bainimarama unilaterally excluded three political parties from the talks. This, of course, completely undermined the UN/Commonwealth efforts, Pascoe said. Fiji badly needs reform, he lamented, but "the perpetuation of illegal military rule only adds to the country's woes." The UN mediation effort cannot continue at this time, he concluded, although the UN will continue to do whatever it can to promote a return to democracy.

¶3. (C) Japanese PR Takasu then spoke, noting that Japan is deeply concerned by the recent events, including abrogation of the constitution. He encouraged UN and Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) efforts to continue working for restoration of democracy and free and fair elections. Takasu also proposed that the Council approve Japanese-drafted elements to the press (see paragraph 5) to be delivered by the Council president after the meeting.

¶4. (C) The UK, France, U.S., and Mexico also spoke; all expressed similar deep concern over the events in Fiji and

urged continued efforts, as possible, by the UN to promote a return to democracy, while acknowledging that the conditions for the UN/Commonwealth joint mediation project have not been met. Mexican PR Heller highlighted the importance of freedom of speech and information, and the need to prevent action against the civilian population. All four delegations stated their support for the press elements, which were approved and delivered by Heller to the press after the meeting.

15. (U) Press elements:

-- The members of the Security Council today were briefed by Mr. Lynn Pascoe, U/SYG for Political Affairs, on the current situation in Fiji.

-- The members of the Security Council are deeply concerned about the situation in Fiji, where undemocratic decisions were made including the abrogation of the Constitution. It is a step backwards in its (sic) restoration of democracy process that Fiji has been undertaking in cooperation with the regional and international partners as well as the UN.

-- The members of the Security Council express hopes that Fiji will make a steadfast advancement towards democracy and that fair elections will be held at the soonest possible timing.

-- The members of the Security Council express their support for the efforts of the Secretary General on this matter.

-- The members of the Security Council continue to follow the

USUN NEW Y 00000408 002 OF 002

situation.

End Press elements.

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